

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims.

- C 1.
- (currently amended) A process comprising:  
forming a metal interconnect structure onto a substrate, said metal interconnect structure extending above a surface of the substrate;  
forming, subsequent to said forming a metal interconnect structure, a carbon-doped oxide (CDO) layer with a first concentration of carbon dopants therein on said substrate and between elements of said metal interconnect structure; and  
continuing to form, subsequent to said forming a CDO layer with a first concentration of carbon dopants, said CDO layer further above said metal interconnect structure with a second concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein the first concentration is higher [different] than the second concentration.
2. (previously amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:  
forming, subsequent to said continuing to form, the CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein there is a linear correlation of the concentration of carbon dopants between the first concentration, the second concentration, and the third concentration.
3. (previously amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:  
forming the CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein the first and third concentrations are higher than the second concentration.
4. (previously amended) The process according to Claim 1 further comprising:  
forming the CDO layer further with a third concentration of carbon dopants therein, wherein the first and third concentrations are lower than the second concentration.
- 5-6. (cancelled)
7. (currently amended) A process comprising:  
forming a carbon-doped oxide (CDO) layer with a concentration of carbon dopants therein;

wherein the concentration varies substantially linearly from a higher concentration in an initially-deposited portion [top] of the CDO layer to a lower concentration in a subsequently-deposited portion [bottom] of the CDO layer.

C1  
8-9. (cancelled)

10. (previously amended) The process according to Claim 7 wherein the concentration varies between about 1 percent and about 20 percent by atomic mass.

11-23. (cancelled)

24-30. (withdrawn)

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